



AWARE Testimony on HB 2 in the Senate Finance and Claims Committee
March 18, 2011

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

AWARE appreciates all of the thoughtful review from the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and from the House on HB 2.

As a statewide business growing in Montana, AWARE appreciates the need to make difficult choices in the current financial situation. We know that the committee has spent a great deal of time and has devoted a great deal of thought to the decisions it has made.

Having said this, AWARE respectfully asks that you consider the following suggestions:

- The children's mental health group homes in Galen serve children with serious emotional disturbance. This rate is currently \$60 per day from the Child and Family Services Division for some of the most intensive children. Adoption of the Governor's 5% plan reduced this rate to \$20 per day.

We urge you to consider restoring the rate to \$60 per day.

- The Governor's budget did not fund Medicaid physician rates as required in statute, as enacted by the 2007 Legislature. SB 354 of the 2007 Session was enacted to address a growing crisis in access to care for Medicaid patients. Based on that statute, AWARE recruited 10 psychiatrists and is attempting to retain them and recruit more. Their caseload consists of approximately 89% Medicaid patients. AWARE is attempting to concentrate on addressing the crisis and meeting this need.

While AWARE recognizes the difficult financial times, we urge you to find a way to fund physician rates for those providers whose Medicaid billing units exceed 50% of their billing units.

Again, we thank you for your hard work.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Jon Metropoulos (406) 461-4296.